(b) if so, whether India has claimed that the differential treatment has led a decrease in its exports of certain textile products to the region during the past few months;

(c) if so, what is the reaction of the WTO dispute body; and

(d) whether any settlement has been reached in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (d) The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) of the European Union (EU) for the period 1st January 2002 to 31st December 2004 *inter alia* provides for suspension by the EU of customs duties for all products which have not graduated, under special tariff arrangements to combat drug production and trafficking. Pakistan is one of the beneficiary countries under this special arrangement. Being against the multilateral frame work of the WTO, and since the concession given to Pakistan may adversely affect India's exports to EU, India had taken up this issue with EU through bilateral consultations held in February 2002. During the consultations it was highlighted that India would stand to lose substantial trade, particularly in the textiles and clothing sector, on account of duty concessions given selectively to Pakistan. The EU was requested to rectify the adverse trade impact due to such concessions. The bilateral consultations did not, however, yield the desired results from India's point of view.

As the first step to resolve the above dispute with EU, under the Dispute Settlement Mechanism of WTO, it was decided to seek consultations with EU. The consultations were held with EU on 25th March 2002 during which certain details regarding adverse impact on our trade were conveyed to the EU. These consultations have, however, not led to positive results. Another round of consultations was held with EU on 9th July, 2002. While India is still open to remedial action from the EU side, further course of action would be taken in accordance with the WTO rules.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Non-Freezing Drink for Soldiers Developed by Defence Scientists

†100. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that defence scientists have developed a drink for the soldiers keeping round the clock vigil on snow covered mountains and which does not freeze even at a temperature of minus twenty degree;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether the said drink has been tested; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The drink prepared by Field Research Laboratory (FRL), Leh has been supplied to troops deployed at different posts of Siachen Glacier. It does not freeze upto 20° C in adverse field conditions as well as in laboratory testing.

Defence Purchases from Countries Supportive to National Interests

101. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to make defence procurements from only those countries who espouse our national interest internationally;

(b) if so, the reasons and details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to consider such a proposal in near future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Procurement of defence items is based on technical and commercial considerations as per the procurement procedure of the Ministry of Defence.

Fire/Accidents in Ordnance Depots

102. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of cases of fire in ordnance factories and accidents in transportation of arms and ammunition have taken place after the failure of Agra Summit in 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the quantity and value of the loss of arms and ammunition besides property and human lives lost in each case;

(c) whether any sabotage has been established in these cases;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, what were the causes of these accidents; and